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ABSTRACT

Consisting of an audio-visual series and study exercises for cooperative, interdependent learning opportunities, this curriculum project is designed to provide in-depth learning and to develop positive attitudes about India in junior high school students. The project can also be used to influence curriculum development and to acquaint teachers with the rich cultural and geographic diversity of India. The audio-visual series, "Images of Modern India," includes six slide programs averaging 12 minutes in length. The programs, which can be used together or independently, cover the following topics: "Cities of India"; "Architecture of India"; "The Children of India"; "Adults at Work"; "Art in India"; and "Transportation." The second part of the project involves the use of cooperative, interdependent classroom exercises. Seventeen group exercises are presented in the form of research questions dealing with diverse subjects. Students working in groups of four or less rely upon information from the audio-visual programs as well as their regular textbooks and other materials about India provided by the teacher. Emphasizing cooperative study and learning, most exercises require written documentation of group work and, if desired, group presentations or debates. Topics addressed include Indian geography, culture, art, village life, and population growth. Several exercises require students to compare life in India with that in the United States. One uses local and foreign newspapers to teach about Indian culture. Other questions deal with the caste system and the policies of Gandhi. (GEA)

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CONTEMPORARY INDIA

by

Peter E. Kneedler, Ph.D.

Fulbright Summer Abroad Program 1987

Curriculum Project

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Fulbright Summer Abroad Program 1987

CURRICULUM PROJECT

CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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Introduction

The purpose of this communication is to describe my India curriculum project. My project has two parts: The first is the development of an audio-visual series, and the second portion contains study exercises for cooperative, interdependent learning opportunities for students. Both are designed to contribute to in-depth learning and the development of positive attitudes about India. This two-part project is described in detail in the attached pages.

The State of California has just adopted a new History-Social Science curriculum Framework in which the southeastern countries of Asia, especially India, receive much more attention than in the past. My trip to India came at an ideal time and has provided me with information that was helpful in encouraging state curriculum planners in establishing new priorities for curricula related to India.

As mentioned above, the primary purpose of this project is to provide California students with learning opportunities about India. However, it will also be used to influence state-level planners to give due consideration to India during upcoming curriculum planning processes. It will be proposed as a workshop session at the Annual Meeting of the California Council of the Social Studies and and at other state and county planning meetings.

Before the content of the project is described, information about the target audience and the primary source of visual material will be discussed.

Target Audience

It is recommended that junior high school students be the target audience for this project for the following reasons. Children at this level possess the cognitive and affective maturity needed to acquire a world view because they have not yet erected barriers to global understanding.

The work of Piaget suggests that by age twelve most children are capable of concrete-operational thought. For example, children at this stage of development have the ability to categorize and order information about their world in logical and objective ways. Also during this period of development, children begin to shift away from egocentricity. The ability to take the role of another person is clearly prerequisite to an acceptance and positive valuation of a characteristic that is different or unfamiliar. Although these programs are designed primarily for students at the junior high level, they still could be used to add dimension to world history and other courses related to global studies at other grade levels.

Source of Visual Material

The major portion of the visual material contained in the programs will be provided by 480 35mm slides that were taken with a Cannon EOS camera during the summer of 1987 while on a Fulbright Fellowship in India. The 480 slides have already been assembled and are complete with titles; however, transition to video cassettes will enable them to be enriched with other visual material and recordings made in India. If economically feasible, and if cooperative arrangements can be made with a county office or college with video production facilities, the 35 mm A-V series will be converted to video cassettes. Video cassettes will also be more transportable and less costly to duplicate.

Content of the Project

As mention above, this project has two parts. The first involves the development of a series audio-visual programs on contemporary India. The second part contains study exercises for cooperative learning.

Part I. A-V Programs

The short A-V programs will fit easily into normal classroom schedules and the content will reflect existing course organization. Each program can be used individually and will not depend on other programs for its successful use. This will make the programs easily scheduled, flexible, and a helpful tool for introducing elementary and secondary children to contemporary India. As mentioned above, the A-V series will also be useful supplements to county and statewide conferences and workshops to acquaint teachers and others with the rich cultural and geographic diversity of India.

Series Title: **IMAGES OF MODERN INDIA**

Program Number 1. **Cities of India** Approximately 12 minutes

This program highlights three types of cities that can be found in India: Historic cities like Old and New Delhi, Agra, and Madras; industrial cities like Calcutta and Bombay; and holy cities like Banaras (Varanasi). Included are busy street scenes, street vendors, and children and adults who live in the cities. Indians at work in the cities will highlight the series. They will be found operating markets rich in agricultural produce and selling an immense variety of products from stores and street stalls.

Program Number 2. **Architecture of India** Approximately 14 minutes

India is incredibly rich in its architecture. Examples of early Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim architecture will be featured in this video, such as the temple complexes at Kanchipuram, the Amber Palace in Rajathan, and the Palace of the Four Winds in Jaipur. The Ellora caves are examples of temples that were sculpted from living rock. Included also are the stone tombs of Mahabalipuram near Madras. In great contrast is the gothic architecture of the British that can be found in some of the major cities. Any discussion of architecture in India cannot leave out the Mughal school, the best example of which is the famous Taj Mahal near Agra.

Program Number 3. **The Children of India** Approximately 12 minutes

This program provides a varied portrait of the children of India. They will be shown in photographs taken in the major cities of New Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay where they are shown attending school or on outings with their parents. Rural scenes will show how children work with their parents in the fields or in small businesses in rural towns. Children will also be shown at play and engaging in activities and games that children all over the world share.

Program Number 4. **Adults at Work** Approximately 10 minutes

The kind of work in which adults participate will be illustrated in the cities and in the rural towns and fields. Adults will be seen operating markets, building high-rise offices and restoring temples, casting iron and weaving, making pottery and teaching school. Women have responded to the pressures of depleting resources and modernization and are reaching new plateaus of income and dignity, and therefore, are featured prominently in this program.

Program Number 5. **Art in India** Approximately 12 minutes

The richness of India's art must be seen to be believed. The dress of men and especially women is an art form in itself; therefore, many photographs of contemporary Indian dress will be included in this program. Dance in a very important art form in India because dance is perceived as a form of worship as well as a form of theater: therefore, photographs of Indians participating in dance routines will included. Indian music, which is vitally important in Indian culture, will be on some of the sound portion of the programs. Photographs of some of the common traditional instruments, like the sitar, will be shown. Some of the wealth of art to be found in statuary and in temples and palaces will be highlighted.

Program Number 6. **Transportation** Approximately 11 minutes

One cannot describe India without using the word diversity, and this term applies equally well to India's transportation. India's modes of transport varies from ultra-modern Boeing 727s to handcrafted wooden carts. The airline industry is clearly one of the most advanced in the world; however, many of the automobiles appear to represent the best of the 1950s. Recent cooperative ventures with Japan have resulted in modern, sleek, fuel efficient cars. India relies very highly on a very complex and pervasive train system. In the towns and cities can be found an enormous variety of devices to move people: horse drawn carts, wagons pulled by camels, pedicabs, and a vast assortment of durable vehicles made entirely of wood.

Part II. Cooperative Group Learning Exercises

The second part of this project involves the development of cooperative, interdependent learning exercises that can be used in the classroom. To deal successfully with the exercises, the students must work in groups of four or less and must rely on information from the short programs described above as well as their regular world cultures texts and other materials about India that can be provided by the teacher. The emphasis here is on cooperative study and learning. Most exercizes will require the production of a list or a written document to which all students in the group must contribute.

In addition to a written product, the teacher may also require an oral presentation that is presented by the group, or the teacher may wish to establish a debate format. The nature of the product should depend on the student level and the amount of curricular time devoted to India, but in all cases, the use of cooperative groups is strongly encouraged.

The following exercises are designed for middle grade students and vary considerably in terms of difficulty level. The teacher must divide students into

groups of four and insure that students are working cooperatively. The teacher may wish to establish a debate format for some of the more controversial issues. A minimum of 15 minutes should be provided for each exercise. Some of the more difficult topics will require an entire class period.

After students have been divided into groups of four, select one of the following questions as a group assignment. It is recommended that the cooperative learning exercises be used near the conclusion of the Indian curriculum. Cooperative group members should be encouraged to use source documents, textbooks, and other related materials. Students should be allowed to visit the library to conduct research on India. The following exercises are not designed to be easy and will require extended discussion and review of resource materials.

Group Exercises

1. What are some of the major problems confronting India? Be sure to address the following topics in addition to other problems that your group identifies. Are there other major countries that you know about that share some or all of these problems? Which ones are they and why did you select them?

overpopulation
technological development
religious conflict
political conflict

2. (Note: The exercise requires that the teacher obtain a copy of a recent Indian newspaper, such as the *BomBay Times*). What can you learn about Indian culture from the news articles, advertisements, features, and special sections? What does your local community paper say about the same topics?

3. It has been said that where people live influences how they live. How is this true in your community? In what ways is this true about India?

4. One of India's major problems is providing sufficient food supplies for its population. How can the Indian government help solve this problem? To what extent should a society help its poor? How does the U.S. help its poor? What role should the U.S. and other developing nations play in helping poor countries?

5. Describe village life in India in terms of:

self-sufficiency
caste distinctions

extended families

Apply these topics to life in your community. What differences do you see?

6. How would you compare life in Indian villages to life in the large cities, like New Delhi, Bombay, or Calcutta? Would a comparison of American rural towns and cities yield any similarities?

7. Why does India have such a rich diversity of architecture? How can the diversity be traced to the history of India and its geography?

8. What are India's major religions? How have they influenced India's architecture and life styles?

9. What problems are created by India's continued population increase and limited food supply? To what extent is the U.S. affected by the same problems? How does the Indian government and the U.S. government deal with these problems?

10. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of India's monsoon climate.

11. What impact has the great diversity of culture, especially in terms of religion and language, had on India?

12. Describe how the following statements apply to India:

> "The art forms of India reflect what the people like as well as what they are familiar with."
>
> "Because art reflects and reinforces values, it will change as people's values change."
>
> "Art is a permanent record of a passing moment in India's history."

13. Although India's cities are very crowded, more and more people are moving from the villages to the cities. Why? Should the government control this movement? Are people still moving from the rural areas to the cities in the U.S.?

14. Is there a relationship between the amount of education a person has and their income? What is the relationship in India? Is it true in the U.S. that the more education you have, the more money you can make? Should this be true?

15. Does the caste system have any relationship to the condition of poverty in India? Why? What effect might prejudice or discrimination have on the motivation or ability of people to succeed in any society? What evidence of a class system do you see in your own community?

16. Can a caster system bring stability? Why? Why is stability important to a society?

17. Do you think Gandhi would have been as effective if he had advocated violence? Please explain. Do you see any similarities to Gandhi and the policies of Caesar Chavez or Lech Walesa? Why?